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LETTER DATED 13 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

1. On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to convey to you some particulars of the situation on the common borders of the Sudan, Uganda and Zaire.

2. It saddens me to have to inform you that - at a time when our country was preparing to participate in the meetings scheduled to be held by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan and Uganda in Antebi on 14 March 1997 in accordance with the Agreement on the normalization of relations between the two countries as transmitted by them to the Council in documents S/1996/738 and A/51/346-S/1996/740 - the Ugandan regime carried out an armed attack on the territory of the Sudan on 9 March 1997 in violation of that Agreement, thus thwarting the Sudan's repeated attempts to establish normal relations with Uganda based on the principle of good-neighbourliness.

3. The attack was directed against the Sudanese town of Kaya, which is located in the salient formed by the Sudan's southern boundary with Uganda and Zaire. The details of the attack are as follows:

(a) The town came under heavy artillery fire from the towns of Liko and Kiri inside Ugandan territory;

(b) At the same time, the Sudanese town of Bazi on the Zairian border came under intensive bombardment from the towns of Umkulu and Ariora in the zone of Ugandan military activity in Zaire;

(c) The shelling was followed by a massive ground attack in which armed helicopters, tanks, armoured personnel carriers and long-range heavy artillery were used. The attack came from two directions: from the Kiri-Liko-Arwa area inside Ugandan territory towards Kaya inside Sudanese territory; and from the Umkulu-Ariora area inside Ugandan territory through Zairian territory towards Bazi inside Sudanese territory;

(d) Ugandan forces also penetrated into Sudanese territory along a third axis from the Ugandan town of Moyo to the Sudanese area of Manqalatory. They

continued towards the Sudanese town of Yei, using tanks and road-construction equipment;

(e) A total of 15,000 persons participated in the attack, members of the Ugandan forces accompanied by a small contingent from the rebel forces, and they were supported by 36 tanks. These forces are still engaged in their hostile and aggressive action inside Sudanese territory as of the present moment.

4. The geographical location of the town of Kaya, the topographical character of the area and the type of weaponry used in the attack confirm in a manner that leaves no room for doubt the obvious fact that the attack was carried out by Ugandan forces. The information available and the military reports received from the field also confirm the involvement of the Ugandan Government. Any attempts by the Ugandan regime to deny its crime and evade responsibility will therefore be refuted by the corroborative evidence in the Sudan's possession. As is obvious, the resources used in the attack surpass the known military capacity of the rebel movement in southern Sudan.

5. The Ugandan aggression gives concrete expression to the successive statements of the Ugandan President concerning his country's decision to resort to warfare in its relations with the Sudan. In a statement made to the Ugandan newspaper New Vision, he called for the separation of the southern Sudan from the north and its establishment as an independent State because of what he has characterized as the oppression by the Arab Muslim north of the Black Christian south. He has also likened the relationship between northern and southern Sudan to the former relationship between Whites and Blacks in South Africa. Furthermore, the Ugandan President has urged that the gang warfare in which the rebel movement in southern Sudan engages should be regarded as the activity of a movement of national liberation against colonialism, and he has done this in order to enable Uganda to provide it with military and other support.

6. These statements made by the Ugandan President have the purpose of provoking hatred, destroying the social fabric of the Sudan and interfering in the Sudan's internal affairs. This represents not only a serious threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sudan but also jeopardizes the security and peace of the region and of the African continent as a whole.

7. Information long available to the Government of the Sudan has confirmed the involvement of the Ugandan regime in a scheme to drain the resources of the Sudan that coincides with other attacks by neighbouring countries on eastern Sudan. The Government of the Sudan has nevertheless continued to act judiciously in the face of this abundance of corroborative information, and it has made a sustained effort to give honourable initiatives for continued dialogue between the two countries a chance to succeed with a view to achieving reconciliation and peace. It exercised self-restraint while awaiting the meeting scheduled to be held on 14 March 1997 in Uganda.

8. The Ugandan aggression once again reveals the lack of political will on the part of the Ugandan leadership with regard to the normalization of relations with the Sudan. The persistence of Ugandan aggression against the Sudan confirms the extremes to which the Ugandan Government has gone in targeting the Sudan. It constitutes an extension of the scheme for attacks on the eastern

borders of the Sudan, and it reflects once more the dangerous character of the Ugandan regime's expansionist ambitions in the region.

9. Uganda's interference in the internal affairs of the Sudan and other neighbouring countries, including areas of eastern Zaire, has now become a phenomenon whose dangers grow more evident every day. It must be addressed with the seriousness it deserves, not only in order to preserve the stability of the Sudan but also to promote security and peace in the Great Lakes region and neighbouring regions.

10. In bringing to your attention the facts relating to the situation on the common borders of the Sudan, Uganda and Zaire, I express the hope that the Security Council will perform the functions required of it out of concern for the integrity and stability of the region and the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

11. In closing, I should like to state that the Sudan reserves in full its right to defend its sovereignty, the safety of its citizens and its territorial integrity. I request you to bring the text of this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council and to have it circulated as a Council document.

(Signed) Elfatih ERWA
Permanent Representative